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The Alchemical Handbell of Rudolf II. A Touchstone of Art and Alchemy

By Corinna Gannon

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The so-called “Alchemical Hand-Bell of Rudolf II.” is an enigmatic piece of goldwork due to its curious materiality. The goldsmith Hans de Bull claims to have cast it from seven metals and thereby enters the realm of Paracelsian magic and alchemy. The artistic technology and alchemical knowledge condensed in the sevenfold alloy known as “Electrum.” The bell, thus, turns out to be a reliable piece of evidence for the Rudolfine ambition to combine art and alchemy.

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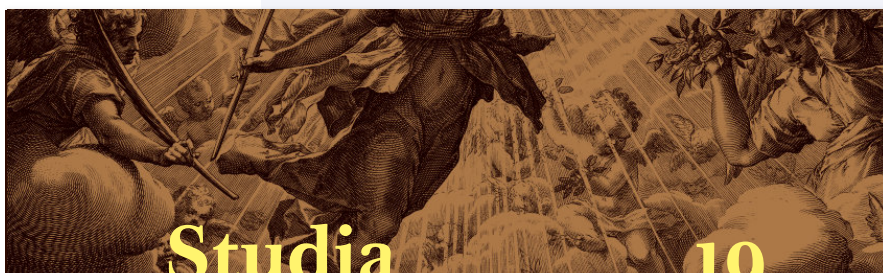
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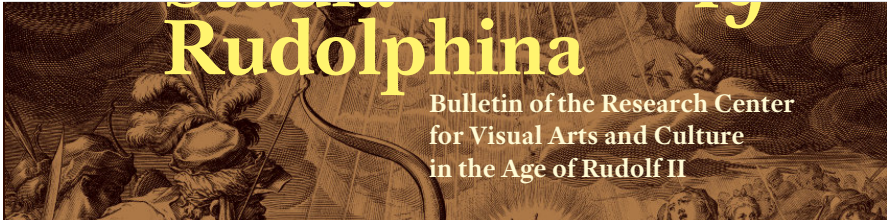


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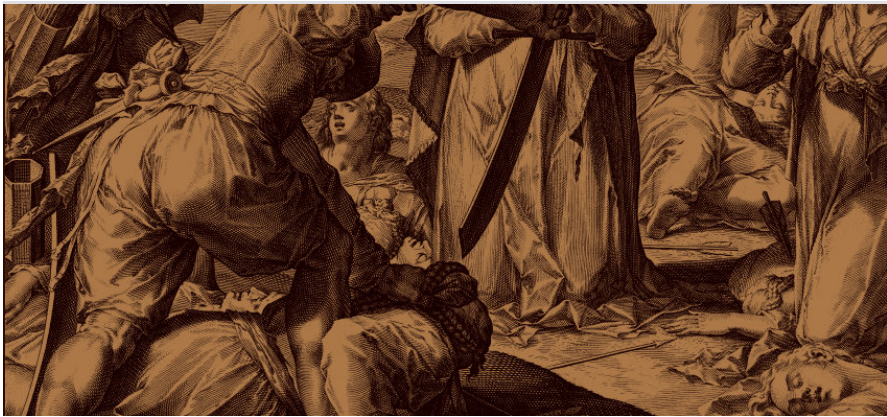
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The Center launched its activities in January 2000,
as a part of the Institute of Art History of the
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focused on art and culture in the age of Rudolf II
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ca. 1620), and accordingly to this mission, it organizes lectures on Rudolfinian topics, keeps a specialized library and collects pertinent visual and verbal documentation. Once a year, the Center publishes a peer-reviewed journal *STUDIA RUDOLPHINA*.

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Table of contents

Editorial /5

ARTICLES

BLANKA KUBÍKOVÁ, Karel of Žerotín,
a Commander of Noble Moravian Descent,
in the *Heldenrústammer* of Archduke
Ferdinand II at Ambras Castle /9

IVAN P. MUCHKA, Erzherzog Ferdinand II. und
die Mathematik: Bücher über Perspektive in
seiner Bibliothek /19

MICHAELA PEJČOCHOVÁ, *Ain Indianisch
tuech, darauf Indianische heuser gemalt:*
Revisiting the Chinese Paintings
in the Kunstkammer of Archduke Ferdinand II
at Ambras Castle /35

ADÉLA MINAŘKOVÁ, The Role of Iconographic
Sources for Engraved Glass by Caspar
Lehmann /51

PRIMA IDEA: NOTES & COMMENTS

ŠTĚPÁN VÁCHA, Eine unbekannte Zeichnung
der böhmischen Krönung Ferdinands II. im
Jahr 1617 – ein mögliches Werk von Aegidius
Sadeler /114

LUBOMÍR KONEČNÝ, From Munich
to Funchal ... /128

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

STEFAN BARTILLA, Zur Zuschreibung der
*Allegorie der Vereinigung von Malerei und
Skulptur* im Victoria & Albert Museum /130

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ADÉLA MINAŘKOVÁ, Bibliography of Caspar
Lehmann /133

INFO

STEFAN BARTILLA, Zur Deutung der
Venus Verticordia des Nikolaus Pfaff im
Kunsthistorischen Museum zu Wien /65

CORINNA GANNON, The Alchemical Hand
Bell of Rudolf II: A Touchstone of Art and
Alchemy /81

JAKUB HLAVÁČEK, The Theory of Signatures
in the Works of the Physician and Paracelsian
Oswald Croll (1560–1608) /99

Activities of the Center in 2018 /141

Summaries /144

Abbreviations /146

Addresses of Contributors /147

Photographic Credits /148



1. Hans de Bull, Alchemical hand bell of Rudolf II (Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien)





